

Caruso's Biography

A Review by W. J. HENDERSON.

ENRICO CARUSO: A BIOGRAPHY. By Pierre V. R. Key. In collaboration with Bruno Zirato. Little, Brown & Co.

THE history of the career of the late Enrico Caruso told by Pierre V. R. Key, will enjoy a unique distinction. It stands alone among biographical works, for none of the famous stars of the operatic stage in recent years has risen to the honor of biographic binding, except in those instances in which the singers themselves are the authors of the books. Mr. Caruso was himself a solitary figure, not because of the extraordinary quality of his art, for there have been lively differences of opinion about that, but by reason of his voice, which was as Maurel once said of Tamagno's, "la voix unique du monde."

Nothing in Mr. Key's volume is more instructive than the very story of this voice. Mr. Caruso was born with the golden tones hidden in his throat, but he did not sing as Adelina Patti did, because he could not help it. On the contrary, he began his career in the face of difficulties which would have driven a less optimistic man into retirement. His voice was weak. It was constricted. It refused to ascend the scale as high as the imperatively necessary B flat without breaking.

Night after night the tenor left the stage smarting under the sting of failure and openly expressed public disapproval. Day after day men who were recognized as authorities in the operatic world told him that he did not know how to sing. And these men told him the truth, for he had the essential B flat in his throat and could not produce it. Only after he had learned by laborious study and continual effort to make his voice emission free did he

reveal to the world the priceless vocal gifts which nature had bestowed upon him.

Mr. Key has told the story of the singer's early struggles clearly and sympathetically. He has skillfully sketched Mr. Caruso's gradual ascent of the ladder of fame till he reached the notice of the all powerful Puccini and the publishers of his operas, the Ricordi of Milan. Even then the singer begged to be excused from risking the high note in the narrative of Rodolfo in the first scene of "La Bohème."

The author has done his work well. The story is direct and often reaches a considerable degree of literary merit. This is particularly the case with the chapter recounting the last visit of the author to the singer, when the latter was ill in his New York apartment and preparing to return to Italy. There is plainly no attempt at a dramatic touch here, but the tragedy of the situation is fully uncovered and the emotion of the writer conveyed in simple words.

There are some interesting letters in the book, but none more awakening than that written to Caruso by Edouard de Reszke, after that celebrated basso had sung in London with the famous tenor. Mr. de Reszke said: "I never heard a more beautiful voice. You sing like a god. You are an actor and a sincere artist and above all you are modest and without exaggerations. You were able to draw from my eyes many tears. I was very much touched, and this happens to me very, very seldom."

The work is supplied with a valuable appendix, in which Mr. Zirato has given the list of Mr. Caruso's many roles with the date and place of his first appearance in each.

Psychology For All

YOUR INNER SELF. By Louis E. Blach. Doubleday, Page & Co.

EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY. By Almo de Monco. Los Angeles: J. F. Rowny Press.

THE GAIN OF PERSONALITY. By W. Charles Loosmore. E. P. Dutton & Co.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIETY. By Morris Ginsberg. E. P. Dutton & Co.

ALTHOUGH the new psychology appears only to have touched the border of a vast and uncharted territory, yet it has already revolutionized our conception of the mind and provided new and previously undreamt of keys to action. To be sure, psychoanalysis may have been somewhat overemphasized of late; it may have tended to stress unduly some phases of life to the neglect of others; yet the fact that psychology has recently taken enormous forward strides is testified to not only by the newly awakened public interest in the subject but by the stream of books that is constantly flowing from the press. All phases of life, from the most secret private behavior to the most important public actions, are affected or should be affected by the new knowledge; and as proof of this one need do no more than to consult the four books under review, which deal with the recent discoveries of psychology in their application both to the individual and to the mass.

At the one extreme, for example, we have Dr. Blach's volume on "Your Inner Self," which will probably prove the most valuable of the four books for the beginner, since it contains a general discussion of the subject and is clear, concise and illuminating in its treatment, although elementary in scope. The reader of this little book will acquire a fair conception of the nature of mind as it is conceived to be by modern thinkers; and if he turns from this work to Almo de Monco's treatise on "Experimental Psychology," he will advance one step further, for Dr. de Monco has gone a little beyond Dr. Blach in providing an interesting and detailed account of the relations between the conscious and the subconscious mind. The latter volume, however, is not so well balanced as the former, is written less vividly and manifests an occasional tendency to be arbitrary or dogmatic in its method.

Somewhat different is Mr. Loosmore's

volume on "The Gain of Personality." As the subtitle declares, this is "A popular psychological statement of the practical values of personality." It undertakes to demonstrate that personality is based on the elements of charm, force, sympathy, symmetry, optimism and modesty; it discusses the difference in personality between the man who merely is the man who thinks and the man who acts; it deals entertainingly with subjects such as individuality, self-expression, sincerity, courage, enthusiasm, repose, humor and sensibility. In a word, it is a handbook for the man seeking self-improvement, and while reading it we are at all times aware of the author's belief that while "No training and no attention can fundamentally alter the cast or the complexion of the mind," yet "much can be done . . . to give it definition and relief, both in form and color."

The above three books all deal with psychology in relation to the individual; in Mr. Ginsberg's volume, on the other hand, we have a discussion of psychology in its application to the group. The author reaches the conclusion that what is known as the general or social mind is for the most part a delusion; that there is nothing in a gathering of men to correspond to the mind of a single member of that gathering; that while there may be unity, a general sympathy or a group consciousness among a large number of persons, still there cannot be that power of concerted thought or of consecutive action that characterizes the individual. In particular the author takes pains to emphasize the role that reason should play in the development of society; he condemns the anti-intellectualists who falsely identify reason with a cold logical faculty of analysis and who separate reason from the will and the impulse to act. Mr. Ginsberg concludes by declaring that "if by reason we understand a principal working within and by means of the impulses and giving them aim and direction, then reason is the very life of the whole social process. . . . What we want is not blind reliance upon mystical impulses, nor less reason but more reason, more understanding, that is to say, of the conditions under which the impulses may be made to work together, so as to lead to the harmonious development of personality in society."

STANTON A. COBLENTZ

BOOKS RECEIVED

Fiction.

THE TRAMPING METHODIST. By Sheila Kaye-Smith. A reprint of her first novel. E. P. Dutton & Co.

ONCE ON A TIME. By A. A. Milne. Described as a "grownups" story of fairyland. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

THE JUNGLE GIRL. By Gordon Casserly. An adventure story. Edward J. Clode.

THE MYSTERY OF THE HIDDEN ROOM. By Marion Harvey. A detective story. Edward J. Clode.

TIMOTHY'S SECOND WIFE. By Isla May Mullins. A romance of a Southern parsonage. Fleming H. Revell Company.

QUEST. By Helen Hull. A novel. The Macmillan Company.

THE OPTIMIST. By E. M. Delafield. A novel. The Macmillan Company.

New and Illustrated Editions.

THE BEAUTIFUL NECESSITY. By Claude Bragdon. A new edition of a book containing seven essays on theosophy and architecture. Alfred A. Knopf.

PENGUIN PERSONS AND PEPPERMINTS. By Walter Pritchard Eaton. A new edition of a group of essays. Boston: W. A. Wilde Company.

THE DOVER ROAD: ANNALS OF AN ANCIENT TURNPIKE. By Charles G. Harper. Second and revised edition. Illustrated by the author and from old prints and portraits. Hartford, Conn.: Edwin Valentine Mitchell.

THE BRIGHTON ROAD: THE CLASSIC HIGHWAY TO THE SOUTH. By Charles G. Harper. Third and revised edition. Illustrated by the author and from old prints and pictures. Edwin Valentine Mitchell.

ROSSETTI AND HIS CIRCLE. By Max Beerbohm. Doubleday, Page & Co.

Nature Stories.

BANNERTAIL. By Ernest Thompson Seton. A story of a gray squirrel. Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE STORY OF A CUCKOO'S EGG. Told and pictured by Hilda Terras. E. P. Dutton & Co.

History and Public Affairs.

THE PRINCETON BATTLE MONUMENT. The history of the monument, a record of the ceremonies attending its unveiling and an account of the battle of Princeton. Princeton University Press.

MEADE'S HEADQUARTERS: 1863-1865. Letters of Colonel Theodore Lyman from The Wilderness to Appomattox. Selected and edited by George R. Agassiz. Atlantic Monthly Press.

SAINT JEANNE D'ARC. By Minna Caroline Smith. The story of the Maid of Orleans told with a religious twist. The Macmillan Company.

THE ESSENTIALS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. By Francis Newton Thorpe. Sets forth the principles on which the American Government rests. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

PERSIA. By Brigadier-General Sir Percy Sykes. A history of Persia from the earliest times to the present day. Oxford University Press, American Branch.

OUR REPUBLIC. By S. E. Forman. The subtitle describes this book as being "A Brief History of the American People." The Century Company.

WESTERN RACES AND THE WORLD. Essays arranged and edited by F. S. Marvin. In "The Unity Series." Oxford University Press, American Branch.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE. By Howard Robinson. A survey of the growth of the British Empire from the first days of English overseas settlement to the present day. Houghton Mifflin Company.

ROLL OF HONOR: Citizens of the State of New York who died while in the service of the United States during the world war. Compiled by Brigadier-General J. Leslie Kincaid, Adjutant-General of the State. Albany: J. B. Lyon Company.

ROME AND THE WORLD TO-DAY. By Herbert S. Hadley. Described as "A study, in comparison with present conditions, of the reorganization of civilization under the Roman Empire which brought to a war-worn world two hundred years of peace." G. P. Putnam's Sons.

THE AGRICULTURAL BLOC. By Arthur Capper, United States Senator from Kansas. With an introduction by Kenyon L. Butterfield. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

CONSUMERS' COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES. By Charles Gide. Edited by Cedric Long. Deals with the practical problems of organization, administration and development of consumers' societies themselves. Alfred A. Knopf.

Poetry and Drama.

BODY AND SOUL. By Arnold Bennett. A play in four acts. George H. Doran Company.

POEMS. By Granville Lowther. Moffat, Yard & Co.

THE GOLDEN TREASURY OF SONGS AND LYRICS. Selected from the best songs and lyrical poems in the English language and arranged with notes by Francis T. Palgrave. New illustrated edition. Two volumes in one. The Macmillan Company.

A TREE WITH A BIRD IN IT: A Symposium of Contemporary American Poets on Being Shown a Pear Tree on Which Sat a Grackle. By Margaret Wildemer. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

BECAUSE OF BEAUTY. By Angela Morgan. Poems. Dodd, Mead & Co.

UNPUN. By Grace E. Hall. Poems. Dodd, Mead & Co.

THE BOOKMAN ANTHOLOGY OF VERSE: 1922. Edited by John Farrar. George H. Doran Company.

Juvenile.

THE STORY OF GRENFELL OF THE LABRADOR. By Dillon Wallace. A boy's life of Wilfred T. Grenfell. Fleming H. Revell Company.

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW? By Dorothy Canfield and others. A book of suggestions for children's games and employments, containing over five hundred games and pastimes. New, enlarged edition. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

THE RUSSIAN GARLAND. A book of fairy tales for children. Edited by Robert Steele. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

THE BUTTERFLIES' DAY. By W. H. Koebel. For children. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

TWO-LEGS. By Carl Ewald. A story-history of mankind for children. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

TOBY AND THE ODD BEASTS. By Netta Syrett. Myths in story form. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

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